



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HADDONFIELD

Vol. 2, No. 3

231 King's Highway East

July, 1959

NOTED AUTHORITY TO SPEAK ON FRANKLIN'S LETTERS AT BOX SUPPER MEETING, SATURDAY, JULY 11, 4 P. M.

One of the most important projects in the field of historical research now in progress is the comprehensive edition of the papers of Benjamin Franklin under the sponsorship of the American Philosophical Society and Yale University.

Projected are about thirty volumes with the first volume scheduled to be published in October of this year with all the ceremony this long looked for work commands.

We are indeed honored to have as our speaker for the July meeting Dr. Whitfield J. Bell, associate editor of "The Papers of Benjamin Franklin,"

and formerly professor of history at Dickinson College.

Dr. Bell has chosen for his talk a subject particularly suitable for an informal al fresco summer meeting—"Adventures with Franklin's Letters."

A gifted speaker whose talks have made many ardent friends for him wherever he goes, Dr. Bell will relate some amusing and astounding anecdotes which turned up in searching for Franklin's papers.

Since "The Papers of Benjamin Franklin" will be the first edition of Franklin's writings in which any at-

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Some members still expect a postcard announcement of the next Historical Society meeting after receiving their Bulletin. As a result we are told they slip their Bulletin in the "to be read" file and miss the date of the next meeting. The Bulletins now take the place of our former postcard announcements so please mark your calendars now with date, time and place before filing your Bulletin to be read later.

DATE: Saturday, July 11

PLACE: Lake Street Friends' Meeting House

TIME: 4 P. M.

PROGRAM: "The Papers of Benjamin Franklin"

Dr. Whitfield J. Bell

BRING A BOX LUNCH TO BE ENJOYED OUTDOORS

JAMES L. PENNYPACKER GIVES ACCOUNT OF THE OLD POTTERY, HISTORIC HADDONFIELD LANDMARK ON POTTER STREET

A charming account of "The Old Pottery," lived in and operated by the Wingender family for 100 years appears in a volume, "Verse and Prose," published by the Haddonfield Historical Society in 1936. Written by James Lane Pennypacker, the story gives a graphic image of one of the most interesting aspects of old Haddonfield. It is our pleasure to reprint a portion of the story here through the courtesy of Mrs. Joseph W. Pennypacker, a member of the Society.

For just one hundred years the old pottery was in consecutive service. No wonder that the village street on which it stood should bear the name of Potter Street. The pottery was a little square brick building equipped with primitive apparatus. There were two old-fashioned wheels with foot pedals driven with a swinging sidewise movement of the leg. There were shelves of common boards on which the shaped and sundried pots stood waiting for the kiln. There were box bins for the already mixed clays. In an outside shed was the grinding and mixing churn set in the centre of a circle around which a steady horse, attached to the end of a ten-foot horizontal bar slowly walked turning the mixer.

It was fascinating to see the skilled workman, sitting over his wheel, slap a gob of wet clay down on the very centre of the wheel and then constantly with the sidewise movement of his leg turn the wheel at even speed, meantime slowly and smoothly with his hands draw up the mass of clay into the desired form and size for his projected pot, keeping dexterously its shape and true curve, finish it off with his sharp-edged wooden scraper and turn down the rim with his fingers. When all was satisfactorily done he would cut the pot free from the wheel by drawing a twine under it. The effect upon a

watching layman was magical. When a sufficient quantity of pots to fill the kiln had been shaped and dried in the sun they were placed in orderly arrangement within the kiln, with air spaces between, and cups of wet salt were set in to fill the whole with salt vapor, thereby giving a salt glaze finish to the ware. Cordwood was stowed in the ovens at the base of the kiln. The kiln was then sealed up with mortar-cement and the wood was fired. For several days and nights the firing was continued. And then when the fire had burned out and the whole was sufficiently cooled the ware were taken out and removed to the store room for sale and distribution.

The potter was one of the earliest of skilled artisans. Away back through history and legend we trace him, and our little village pottery had departed scarcely at all from the earliest known methods of workmanship.

For many years our simple pottery was in the hands of local owners and managers, then there came from Germany two men who had learned the business in the potteries on the Rhine and in the German mechanical art schools. They had little money and they leased our village pottery because it was small and the rental was within their means. They came with their wives, one a

young bride, and they settled down to their venture industriously and intelligently and soon their pottery became one of the few established industries in our little residence village.

One of the men, an artist, engraved designs for flower and leaf decorations or pictures with figures of men and women, and gods and goddesses for large steins and flower-stands. Taking upon his knees his plaque of hard white modeling-clay he would carve in the reverse his beautiful designs, thus making moulds with which to stamp his figures upon dishes or steins he was forming. He would thus prepare artistic moulds without picture plan before him. He was a true creative artist and executed his ideas from his imagined scene. The women did the coloring, painting in with brush the blues or browns or yellows required for proper effect.

FRANKLIN'S LETTERS

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tempt has been made to publish all of his incoming as well as outgoing correspondence, Dr. Bell's experiences in collecting the papers will be an invaluable addition to anyone's Frankliniana.

Dr. Bell will also tell us the process used by the sponsoring groups in collecting the papers and letters.

It is a rare privilege to have this preview of one of the great historical-literary events of our times on the man who more than any other left his cultural and patriotic stamp on the region in which we live.

This meeting is obviously one that is "not to be missed" and guests as well as members are invited to share Dr. Bell's "Adventures."

DR. NICHOLS ILLUMINATES STATE'S 300th ANNIVERSARY

It is always a joy to a native or adopted son or daughter of New Jersey to hear the history of his state so affectionately recalled and so authoritatively projected as is the special talent of Dr. Roy F. Nichols who spoke at our Society meeting in April on "New Jersey's Coming 300th Anniversary."

Dr. Nichols, Pulitzer prize historian and celebrated author of many historical books is the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and Vice Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, a native of this state, a graduate of Rutgers University and now on its Board of Governors.

His wise counsel on preserving historical data and tips on making the celebration "real" was matched in interest only by his charming digressions on boyhood reminiscences in North Jersey.

Dr. Nichols reminded us that the oldest settlement in New Jersey is Jersey City (1618), that history dies every day with the people who die and suggested four ways to secure important historical data when Haddonfield celebrates its 250th anniversary in 1963:

1. Contact as many people as you can and get their reminiscences. Make out a schedule of questions and be persistent and patient in getting the answers.
2. Seek out collections of letters—in attics, bank vaults, store-rooms.
3. Consult old newspapers of the local press.
4. Find out how people lived through their personal belongings such as furniture and household equipment.

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Historical Society of Haddonfield

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DR. NICHOLS

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Dr. Nichols also emphasized that understanding state history starts at the local level. Since Haddonfield was one of the early settlements in New Jersey, its history will be an important feature in the celebration of New Jersey's 300th anniversary in 1964.

NICHOLS TELLS WHY NEW JERSEY IS CONSIDERED A "STEP-CHILD"

Sandwiched between bigger, more populated states, Pennsylvania and New York, New Jersey has had difficulty coming into its own, said Dr. Nichols at the April meeting of the Society.

Dr. Nichols threw some interesting sidelights on the reasons for this unequal status of New Jersey despite its immense industrial, agricultural and cultural contribution to the country.

"New Jersey became a place to come home to," said Dr. Nichols. "The people's energies were expended in other states. Also there is no other state where there is such a great mixture of peoples." Dr. Nichols felt that this factor and the political division of many of New Jersey's localities did not contribute to a sustained unified effort at home.

The Historical Society of Haddonfield

The purpose of the Society is to encourage historical study and research, to perpetuate the historical heritage of Haddonfield and to acquire and preserve articles of historical and antiquarian interest.

Open Tuesday through Saturday afternoons from 2:30 to 4:30 o'clock.

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